

UNCLASSIFIED
TELEGRAM

BH 055

INDICATE
☐ COLLECT
☐ CHARGE TO

File (5) 36

FROM	AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES	CLASSIFICATION	
E.O. 11652:	GDS		
TAGS:	ELAB, SHUM, AR (Smith, Oscar)		
SUBJECT:	Labor Minister Replies to AFL-CIO Telegram		
ACTION:	SECSTATE WASHDC		
	BUENOS AIRES 1652		
AMB	1. Labor Minister Liendo has shown shown Labatt		
DCM	letter he plans to send to AFL-CIO President		
POLR	Meany responding to Mr. Meany's recent		
LAB-3	telegram regarding the abduction and dis-		
USIS	appearance of Buenos Aires light and power		
ECOM	worker leader Oscar Smith a year ago. Liendo		
LEGATT	called the AFL-CIO cable "correct" in form		
SY	and said it deserved a reply because of its		
RF	serious substantive content. The Minister's		
CHRON	letter will be transmitted via Argentine		
	Embassy in Washington. The thrust of Liendo's		
	reply is that the kidnapping is an abominable		
	act which has caused distress to the GOA and		
	that everything possible is being done to		
	investigate the case and bring the perpetrators		
	to justice.		

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

Release () Excise () Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: () In Part () In Full

() Classify as () Extend as () Downgrade to

Date Declassify on Reason

DRAFTED BY:	DRAFTING DATE	TEL. EXT.	CONTENTS AND CLASSIFICATION APPROVED BY:
LABATT:AGFreeman:gcr	3/6/78	277	POL:WHHallman

CLEARANCES:

POLR/DSmock

LEGATT:RScherrer (info) af

SY:RKelly

CHARGE: MChaplin

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50153-101

81F93
(51/52)OPTIONAL FORM 153
(Formerly FS-413)
January 1975
Dept. of State

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2. Liendo also stated that President Videla and he had each sent personal Yule time letters to Mrs. Smith, although they had no useful or enlightening information at their disposal to reveal as to her husband's whereabouts or fate.
3. Department may wish to alert AFL-CIO that Liendo letter is on its way.
4. Liendo told Labatt privately he feared that Smith was dead (since nothing more has been heard about him all this time).
5. COMMENT: At the time of Smith's disappearance there was speculation that his ~~kidnap~~ kidnapping may have been intended by those responsible to foil a private agreement reportedly reached between Liendo and Smith to end a light and power workers strike. According to alleged eye-witness accounts of the kidnapping, the incident had all the earmarks of a typical security operation and it has been widely suspected that the abduction was the work of one of the government security agencies. Some sources cast suspicion particularly on the Navy, interpreting the action as a warning against any labor leaders who made political deals with the so-called "populist wing" of the Army. Embassy components have no further information which can shed light on this incident. Most trade union observers believe that Smith is probably dead.

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